PS
635
Z9 Y32

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.
PS 635
Chap. Copyright No.
.Z9Y32
Shelf
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

VIOLETS:

—OR—

JASPER LUCKINGS,

THE

KANUCK LANDLORD

AND

CALIFORNIA GARDENER.

A TRAGI-COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
COPYRIGHT.
SEP 12 1884
162620
CITY OF WASHINGTON.

ABEL YATES, - - AUTHOR.

COPYRIGHT 1884, BY ABEL YATES.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

PS635
.Z9Y32

TMP92-007614

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

NELLIE,.....Orphan and Violet Girl
RUTH,.....Widow
ELIZA,.....Niece of Ruth
RACHAEL,.....Joe's Wife
ALONZO,.....Villain
JACK,.....Gambler
JOE,.....From Jarsey
MERRILL,.....Wells Fargo's Bank Agent
KIT WELCH,.....At the Willows
KENTUCK & HOOSIER,.....At Cherokee Ravine
JASPER.....Kanuck Landlord & California Gardener

VIOLETS,

OR

Jasper Luckings, the Kanuck Landlord and California Gardener.

ACT I.—SCENE.

Office appearing room in Temperance Hotel, named Ruth's House, situated in a Mining Camp called in early day, Greenwood Valley, California.

(*Enter* RUTH and ELIZA.)

Eli.—He seems a stranger; and aunt, what could he mean when he gave you such a penetrating gaze and said in a low tone, "Hush!" I fancied I saw you nod assent, and I certainly thought you recognized him.

Ruth.—Eliza, will you promise to keep a secret?

Eli.—Yes, aunt; but what makes you so pale?

Ru.—Listen, Eliza. I believe that man was robbed once by Alonzo. Don't you remember the last time Kit was here, he said he'd written a man, and if he turned up Alonzo would remember with sorrow his ingratitude, and, if I am not mistaken, that man made the first garden on Garden Ranch, that in justice belongs to Nellie, and I do believe he is here on that business.

Eli.—Why, aunt, do you think he is the man that wrote the letter you hold so sacred?

Ru.—Yes, Eliza. But, oh, how changed, except his voice. Don't breathe this.

El.—Don't fear. I only wish he may succeed with the villain and get his own.

Ru.—Yes, the villain. But poor creature, with those three wrongs staring him—this man's, Nellie's and ours—what must be the torture of his mind, for I hear there is no hope of his getting relief.

(ALONZO, *villain*, *cloth around neck*.)

Al.—Well, ladies. How is your health? Any news?

Ru.—We are well.

El.—What encouragement did they give you at the city?

Al.—None too good. It looks dark.

El.—What do they pronounce it, may I ask?

Al.—At first a tumor,—now a cancer.

El.—That is fearful.

Al.—Yes; they all unite in pronouncing it beyond cure, and advise me to adjust business matters and prepare for the worst.

El.—You asked if any news. None, only we were on the balcony, and a queer looking old man approached us and asked the name of this village. Aunt said, "Greenwood Valley." We asked him in, as he looked jaded and strange. He said, "By and by," and walked off.

Al.—I may see him. Strangers are rare now to what they were in early days. But what is that to me.

El.—You should not be too disconsolate, for it will not assist you in bearing your affliction.

Al.—Thanks; it's truth. (*Looks serious.*)

Enter JACK, *the Gambler.*

Jack.—Ho! Alonzo. You feel bad. I hear you got poor chance.

Al.—Yes; don't feel any too well, Jack. Any news?

Jk.—Well, yes; a little. We're square, ain't we?

Al.—Yes, I think so.

Jk.—All right, then. The news is Stockton Ike is dealing Spanish monte for the boys over to Jake's, and Old Sam, from 'Frisco, is with him and furnishes the rio. It's open game and likely to be desperate. My stake is too small. I'm likely to fret at placing last stack. That checks nerve. Can't do anything with them fellers without good stake and nerve. I may fluke, but that's poor chance. If they come my way I want to press. If they run for bank I want enough to see what it means. Can you do anything for me?

Al.—I would rather not. I have concluded to keep my business snugger from this on.

Jk.—What do you mean by that?

Al.—It means no more lend.

Jk.—Are you mad, or do you want to quit me?

Al.—I don't know what I want, Jack. I'm struggling—

Jk.—See here; best friends must part, so good-bye, Alonzo.

Al.—Good-bye.

Jk.—(*Hesitating.*) I thought I'd fix things a little better between us. You're sick, and maybe a little peevish. I'm well, and ought to act well. We've been together through this country a good deal, and

if you want anything of me any time, say so. I shan't profess much outside love for you for fear you'd think it from a mercenary motive, but I wish you to believe me, Alonzo. I shall always keep an open ear wishing for your welfare. Alonzo, you're *sick*, and it's a hard game, but don't forget it's up-and-up—a square deal—no slipping the cut—no dealing from the brake—no bluff, and no attempt on the hold-out. This being done on truth, you're sure to hear said, "Good hand; rake." We've all got the last deal to make, and last hand to show, and for safety in game it's imperative to know our man. *Extended hand. Exit.*

Enter JOE *and* RACHAEL.

Joe.—How do du? (*Nodding, and being little in advance of Rachael.*) We're all the way from Jarsey, my good wife, Rachael, and I We've been a long while wandering up and down through valleys and mountains, hoping to find our girl, Amy. Don't know her, du ye, any of ye? (*No one answers.*) Say, who's boss here?

Ru.—I keep this place, sir.

Joe.—Don't know her, du ye?

Ru.—No, sir.

Joe.—We're tired. May we sit down?

Ru.—Certainly; take seats.

Joe.—Got anything to drink?

Ru.—(*Dressed and looks the pattern of meekness.*) There, Joseph, for mercy sake don't ask. Whenever we get to a new place and can't find Amy, he falls with drink.

Ru.—There is no danger here; we sell no drink.

(*Enter* MERRILL, *the* BANKER.)

Mer. (*to Alonzo*) – Sir, the Quartz Mining Co., together with our Georgetown Branch, are drawing heavily upon us. When you are liable to draw, would you grant two days' notice, that I may order funds accordingly from the city?

Al.—I presume so. (*Exit* MERRILL.)

Nel.—(*Singing plaintiff stanza outside*). *Nellie, the orphan, enters, dressed and looks the friendless, with Bunch of Violets in hand, steps toward Joseph and Rachael, but timidly, on account of Alonzo's gaze. She says:*

Will you buy my violets? Only one bit.

Al. (*villainous tone*)—What a saucy, impudent huzzy, to strangers. (*Joseph and Rachael say nothing, but are awe stricken.*)

Joe.—(*Gives rushing step across stage, looks at Nellie, gives a wondering gesture and groans.*)

Ru.—Joseph! (*and he sits down.*)

Enter JASPER, *with little bundle.*)

Jas.—(*Walks in, looks upon all,—when sees the villain* [*very much agitated*], *stepping toward Ruth and Eliza says*: Are you the women I saw on the porch while ago?

El.—Yes, sir.

Jas.—Who keeps this house? Keep boarders? Sell rum?

Ru. (*agitated*)—I am the hostess, sir. I entertain travellers, but sell no rum. Shall I take your parcel (*wiping eye and quietly affected*).

Jas.—Wait a minute. (*Inward struggling*).

Joe. (*Runs up to Jasper, touching and hunching him*)—Say, ha'nt got any rum here? I want some too. You give me four bits and I'll go and get a flask. We'll have a good time. I'm from Perth Amboy, New Jarsey, I am; I'm good 'un when I get thawed out. Goin' to skin the mun.? (*Jasper looks at him and steps a little away*).

Ru.—Joseph! (*he goes to Rachael*).

Jas.—What do you call this house?

Ru.—Ruth's House.

Jas.—What's Ruth stand for?

Ru.—My name is Ruth.

Jas.—Didn't I see Ruth House, Greenwood Valley, to rent, furniture and all, in *San Francisco Bulletin?*

Ru.—Yes, sir; this is the place.

Jas.—Maybe I'll try and rent it, when I get rested out. What's your rates for board and room a week?

Ru.—From $5.00 to $12 00.

Jas.—Give me a five-dollar place. There's first week's board, and take bundle.

Nel. (*to Jas.*)—Please, sir, buy my violets; I'm faint or I wouldn't ask you. Do, please. (*Alonzo hisses and she sits down*).

Al.—You intimated taking this house; have you any hotel experience?

Jas.—Yes, plenty.

Al.—What are your principles of management?

Jas.—To keep hotel that shall stand criticism.

Al.—The reason I ask, I own the house.

Jas.—If I bargain, are you willin'? Now, my name is Jasper Luckings,—I'm a Kanuck tavern-keeper by trade. I always make it a pint to talk to the owner, and I want you suited. What du ye say?

Al.—That sounds right.

Jas.—Yes or no? I'm one them fellows.

Al.—Yes.

Jas.—Say, what ails your neck, I see you got a rag on it? and what's your name?

Al.—My name is Alonzo, and my neck is very sore.

Jas.—Will you be good enough to let me talk to the girl a minute? (*Not waiting answer, turns to Nellie.*) Come here, little girl (*She trips quickly to Jasper. Seems anxious to sell from hunger.*)

Nel.—Only one bit! sir.

Jas. If I buy 'em, what'll you do with the money?

Nel. (*Putting her mouth to his ear.*) Buy buns! I'm faint.

Jas.—Buy buns, and hungry! (*Catching from emotion.*) There, you take that, and I'll take the posies.

Nel.—Oh! mercy! mercy! (*Clapping hands.*) $2! (*Skipping.*) Thanks! Thanks!

Jas.—Go and get buns and come right back, quick; I want to see you.

Nel. You bet I'll get buns. I won't be hungry again for a week, and the violets will be nice, 'cause I won't have to pick 'em for a week to sell. I'll be right back. Oh, what's you're name? I forgot.

Jas.—Call me Jasper. (*Exit Nellie.*) (*To Alonzo.*) That's your girl; I see how it looks, now. Your sick, and your poor child has to sell flowers off your wife's grave to get food. What a varying world of sunshine and cloud; it must work on your feelings. See here, sir; I hain't none too much money, but I'll split it. You go to a doctor and get your neck fixed. Don't go hungry, and take good care of the girl, and when the money is gone come to Jasper again, and if I take this house you and the girl both come and make it your home. I s'pose the reason the rent hain't enough to keep you both is 'cause your sick. But never mind that; you cheer up; see things hopeful, and you'll be better off than you think for.

Al.—(*Raising bowed head.*) Thanks, sir, for your kind offer. It gives me both pain and pleasure. But you are mistaken. The girl is not mine neither am I void of money, and as regards getting my neck fixed, as you call it, it's impossible. Nevertheless your reasoning and kindness has caught, and liable to be of more value to me than you anticipated. I hope you may take the place. (*Exit.*)

Jo.—Say, he's gone, and I'm glad. Don't you think him gol darn mean, the way he acted to that young one? By gosh, if I'd been half tight I'd show'd him what tree 'd make shingles. And it's darned queer Rachael and I both spoke at once as the young one tickled over bun money, "Don't she act like our Amy." But it's 'cause we fret, and

we mus'nt du it. But I'll bet a gallon of Jarsey cider I'll lick him yet. I can lick him or anybody that takes his part if I see any more of his dirty work. (*Knocking fist on table and taking queer fighting position.*)

Ra.—Joseph! (*He goes and sits by her.*) (*Exeunt all but Jas.*)

Enter MERRILL, *the banker.*

Mer.—(*To Jas.*) There has been an injunction upon Wells Fargo, respect ng Alonzo's deposits, and I am advised from the head of the house in San Francisco to see you to know what to say in case he wants to draw.

Jas.—You are not peddling this around? And how did you know I was the man?

Mer.—(*From gesture*) You was in office.

Jas.—I trust you have the two days' notice duly effected.

Mer.—Yes, sir.

Jas.—Am I correct in understanding he has no papers if assigned you would have to honor?

Mer.—No, sir. He has no deposit receipts. Our Ledger and his memoranda, compared monthly, is the way we do it.

Jas.—Has he deposited anything since the injunction?

Mer.—Yes, sir.

Jas.—Well, let him draw to the amount of his deposits since the injunction. Any amount beyond that, claim the two days' margin he granted you and keep me apprised of his movements.

Mer.—Certainly, and with all due secresy.

Jas.—(*Slight bow. Absorbed in Meditation.*) (*Exit Merrill.*)

Enter NELLIE.

Jas.—Got back, have you, already? Did you spend your money?

Nel.—(*Chewing.*) Not all—I eat a lot 'o buns and coffee—sugar and milk in it—oh, so good—it cost two bits. I left six bits for buns when I want 'em. I got one dollar here. I want to give that to a poor old woman that washes. You see I sleep with her in the cabin. I know she'll be tickled. Are you willin'?

Jas.—Yes, that's good. Get that box and come and sit down here. I want to talk to you. I won't hurt you. You ain't afraid, be you? (*aside*) Children, tell truth.

Nel.—Afraid! I guess not. Anybody give me two dollars, as you did, and as hungry as I was, makes me feel good towards you. I feel good towards everybody. I 'spose its cause I eat so much buns. (*laughing and pushing down ragged dress*). What makes you look so sorry? You hungry?

Jas. (*shakes head*)—What is your name?

Nel.—Nellie. Sometimes they call me Nel.

Jas.—What's your father's name, and where does he live?

Nel.—William Page. He's dead. Did live on Garden Ranch.

Jas.—Where is your mother.

Nel.—Dead, too (*dropping head and sighing*). Buried over the brook, close by the cabin, under live oak tree.

Jas. (*aside*) *My God! I knew them both; their house was a home to me, before and after I was robbed. I must help their darling.*

Nel.—Oh, I ought to go and water my violets, but I shan't have to pick violets for a week; they'll grow nice. Six bits will keep me in buns for a week, and in that week maybe I can sell few buns, then I can let violets be mor'n a week. You see, I don't touch the violets until I get too hungry sellin' buns. Buns don't sell fast as violets, but when violets get short, I'm sure to get hungry. You see, I got to sell twelve buns, then eat one. Sometimes sell eleven, then it sticks all day; then I water my violets by moonlight, if it shines. Get up early, when hungry, and sell violets quick. Folks seem to believe me more when I tell 'em I'm hungry, when I got violets than when I got buns. I 'spose they think I ought to eat the buns when they hain't mine, and go on. But when I got violets, and tell 'em where I get 'em they just act and talk nice and buy 'em. I tell you, violets gets buns right smart, if there was only more.

Jas.—Where do you get the violets?

Nel—On mammy's grave; and it's so queer. Maybe you know?

Jas.—What's queer?

Nel.—Why, you see, the grass on mammy's grave started just a little, and when the rains quit I got water from the brook and sprinkled it every night and it growed nice. And, don't you believe, one Sunday morning, (I don't sell buns or violets Sundays, but I go to Sunday school on the outside), when I was looking how nice the grave was, I seen a tiny blossom, and I was careful of it, and it spread all over mammy's grave and it's now a pretty bed of violets, and it's so queer where the seed come from. Can you tell?

Jas.—(*Affected.*) No.

Nel.—Where do ye think? Tell me, like a good old man.

Jas.—Perhaps some kind hand planted it.

Nel.—'Twant no ugly hand, and I thought maybe I could sell some for bun money, and did, and they stopped a heap of hungry that selling buns wouldn't.

Jas.—(*Aside.* Heavenly manna.) What did you mean when you said you went to Sunday School on the outside?

Nel.—Oh, I don't go in now, since mamma died; my clothes won't let me, but I stand outside and hear all, and run afore they come out; then they can't talk about my ragged clothes—don't hear 'em anyway, if they du.

Jas.—You seemed afaid of Alonzo. What for?

Nel.—(*Sighing.*) I don't know, hardly. He seemed good quite a while after mammy died, but one day before the violets growed I was so hungry, I only eat one bun all day, and I remembered he promised mammy he'd watch me, so I told him I was faint; he gave me some bread, but it was so hard I had to dip it in the brook, but it tasted good. That night I dreamed about him and mammy; I asked if I might tell him; I met him on the trail; we was alone; he acted good and said yes; I told part; he walked off quick and wiped his eyes as if the sun hurt 'em, and ever since he seemed queer, just as he did before you give me the $2.

Jas.—What was the dream?

Nel.—Let me think; I dream so much. Oh! I was by mammy's grave, watering it, and heard her voice; I looked up, and there was mammy and Alonzo; mammy was talking to him, smiling, and looked pretty, with one hand pinting to me and the other to the sky. Alonzo made motion; I went; he got on his knees and made such loud talk it waked me up, and they was both gone, and ever since he was so cross, but the violets growed and I didn't have to ask him for more bread.

Jas.—Had you rather sell violets than do anything else?

Nel.—I don't know. I like it if I had lots of violets, 'cause I wouldn't get so hungry trying to sell buns

Jas.—How would it do to make a big bed of violets?

Nel.—Oh, that wouldn't do, I'm afraid!

Jas.—Why?

Nel. 'Cause, when I just say "violets" they act just as they du when I say "buns"; then I tell 'em where they grow, then they buy 'em quick; then they ask me lots 'o things, and act sorry 'cause they didn't buy 'em before, so I think they only want grave violets

Jas.—Do you like the cabin best for a home?

Nel.—I like it 'cause I have nice dreams there. Maybe if had a nicer home mammy wouldn't come and kiss me and smooth my hair down, and put another blanket on me when I hadn't one, and was cold. But I don't know what I'll do, 'cause the woman what sleeps

with me is going to Georgetown to live, and I can't stay alone. If I only had some one till I went to sleep.

Jas.—You are getting most big enough to work out.

Nel.—Yes, sir; but I hate to go fur, cause I couldn't be here nights to water the violets. The woman that lives on our ranch says, if her girl gets married, she'd want me; but I don't want to do that. I was there two days and helped her wash bed close well as I could, and she called me a fool cause I couldn't wring good. I could wash nice, but next day my wrist was lame and she scolded awfully; but she give me nice heel of bread to pay.

Jas.—Who owns the ranch now?

Nel.—I guess 'Lonzo. He did. Mammy said it ort to be mine.

Jas.—How would you like to live with Ruth?

Nel.—Oh, she dassent. I think she would, only for that. I don't want to talk about that now.

Jas. If I take the Ruth House, would you like to come then?

Nel. Yes, but Alonzo owns it. Mammy and I used to live in it 'fore we moved in the cabin. He said we'd go back on the ranch in a little while, and mammy believed him, and when he told us the man wouldn't leave and we couldn't go, mammy cried most all night. She waked me up a good deal crying, hugging and kissing me, and she never got well again.

Jas.—Have you got any your mammy's old books and papers alying round in the cabin.

Nel.—I've got her old Bible and some papers in it with a string tied round it.

Jas.—Well, now, we've had a nice talk, Nellie, and I have found out how matters stand.

Nel.—Yes, sir; but when you goin' to take the house? I wish you would.

Jas.—I can't say; perhaps right off, and maybe not at all; but, say nothing.

Nel.—I'll keep still, but I wish you would. (*Exit.*)

Enter RUTH

Ru.—Well, sir, you have been so busy talking with others, I have hardly had an opportunity to acquit myself as becomes a hostess, but I sent your parcel to your room which is No 9, first floor, which I trust will meet your approbation.

Jas.—No. 9. All right, lady. I have always thought it lucky, by accident, to get an odd number, when assigned a room by hotel clerk.

But I trust my odd appearance has not inculcated the odd lay-out—excuse *odd*ity.

Ru. (*giving an inquiring gaze and grief-stricken smile*)—Quite excusable, sir But, for heaven's sake, speak and tell me, are you Yates, the Gardener, or am I dreaming? (*Silence, a moment.*) You said, "Hush," on the balcony. I caught the idea, and I call heaven to witness my vow of secrecy; but this one question, will you answer, are you the title founder of Garden Ranch, in days of yore?

Jas. –I saw danger, and said, "Hush." You are not dreaming; you will handle the maid safely. I believe in your secresy, and I promise developements as circumstances will admit (*feelingly extending hand*).

Ru.—Rest assured the maid is safely advised. The villain is sick. I know your pursuit, and may heaven aid you to your own. But remember, he's been cruelly wrong ever since yours.

Jas.—I know him. Let's act not: give me what you know ere and since his illness.

Ru.—I knew him ere his illness to be a smooth-tongued, cool, deliberate, cunning, deceptive, heartless, cowardly, and sometimes weak-minded, villain. Insomuch that the maid (my neice), myself and Nellie, that you must know her parents when living, we are all nothing but objects of charity from the cruelty of his chicanery. And since his illness, up to recently, he seems as if calculating the chances of the physicians being mistaken in their verdict of non-cure. Why, sir, he promised Mrs. Page, Nellie's mother, that Nellie should not want, and it seems he would see her perish with hunger, even after defrauding her parents out of Garden Ranch, that should now belong to Nellie in equity, but he has it all lawfully secured. Miner's Ranch, that justice (could it be unveiled) would declare to be mine and Eliza's, and this house, I like to forget, is Nellie's in justice, but he has it and ours safe as his. And as for public opinion, were he to die to-morrow, no sigh, I believe, only for his crimes. Just observe his maniac cruelties. We thought having Nellie to live with us; he smiled, but shook his head, and promised good things for Nellie, but never performed. It seems his depriving her of the small, makes him feel more safe in greater.

Jas.—Would it not have been better had you shown more independence in ministering to the wants of Nellie?

Ru.—I dared not, fearing his displeasure. He would, very likely, put us all upon the street. He owns this house and contents. True, we have it free of rent, but it's only fearing the vigil, that he does it, I have thought.

Jas.—Were I to take this house and shelter Nellie, as I should,(for her parents would either do it for my child,) in your opinion what would be the result?

Ru.—Heaven only knows.

Jas.—If he should die, what faith have you in his making restitution?

Ru. Not the least hope, sir.

Jas.—Well, what kind of a man is this Merrill, that represents the banking house of Wells Fargo?

Ru.—Well, sir, we think him of stirling principle, in so much, if we and he were not so very poor, he would be the husband of Eliza, my niece, inside one hour. They are engaged, and the marriage is mutually deferred, fearing his superiors might reasonably think him undertaking beyond his financial position.

Jas.—Have patience with my interrogation. Would it be possible, (considering Merrill's poverty, affection and deferred marriage), could Alonzo bribe him to disallegiance of trust. Remember, the influences mentioned is a powerful combination.

Ru.—I am confident he would spurn any offer to betray confidence. He's extract of true Southern blood.

Jas.—You might possibly misconstrue his meditations since ill. He may be listening to true conscience, and not the decision of faculty.

Ru.—Why does he not do right, then?

Jas.—That seems a proper question, but listen and go deeper. First conscience, then will, and he may be warring within for victory, will or not.

Ru.—Heaven only knows. And may I ask, have you any hopes of retrieving yours? If you have, waste no time or chance. Any service I can render, just say Our is hopelessly gone; don't let it's influence have any effect upon your plot, for I doubt if its strength will admit of dilution.

Jas.—I have hopes in plot for mine, but I must add to plot for Nelly and yours. The adding is in part to pay a debt: were I to shrink, the villainy would be of darker hue than Alonzo's.

Ru.—(*Ends of fingers to forehead.*) You daze my brain. (*Quiet for a moment.*) In the name of heaven tell me, if you will, upon what you base your hopes for us, or what influence induces the attempt,

Jas.—The influence of what I owe the departed, and the influence of hoping he may listen if he had a mother For who can forget mother's apron-wiped-tear when ministering counsel to her wayward wandering boy?

Ru.—Well, you are determined then?

Jas.—Yes.

Ru.—What shall I do?

Jas.—Let me have this place. I act as proprietor, you and Eliza housekeep and chambermaid. The bargain said to be equity. The rest a secret unless we disagree; then Alonzo to adjust. Possibly the man sees his position, and may let go his Shylock grasp. Will you give me the place, and expand your promise of secresy? Tell not even your neice, for there lies an innocent danger (from elation) to give me away to her betrothed.

Ru.—The place is yours and your plans shall not be frustrated by any disclosures.

Jas.—Then from this I manage, and if things look a little queer, and I in silent soliloquy, will you promise to ask no questions about Alonzo, until the climax of failure or success?

Ru.—I do promise, but with no great faith in your success.

Jas.—Will you promise to indicate indifference and no questions?

Ru.—I do; and will obey any virtuous order. (*Exit.*)

JOE AND RACHAEL.

Joe.—You talk takin' this house. I guess y'd du well.

Jas.—I've taken it. What makes you think I'd do well?

Joe.—'Cause I want a job. Will ye give it?

Jas.—I don't know. Will you mind me?

Joe.—Yes; why not? You give me chance and see me act.

Jas.—Act how?

Joe.—Jest right every time. Keep weeds and grass down, and do chores almost, when they're too little, and I'll be 'round when there's fightin'. I want a good big clip at that feller that's got rag on his neck. What do ye say do ye want me?

Jas.—I couldn't have a worse thing around a public house than a fightin' man; but you wouldn't hurt anything, for I'm inclined to think you a coward.

Joe.—Coward! Coward! Coward! You'd better try me.

Jas.—Well, if you worked for me and was quarrelsome, I'd try ye.

Joe.—Say, can you fight? Good?

Jas.—I've been there little; ain't much of a fighter.

Joe.—How did ye get yer teeth out? Fightin'?

Jas.—'Twant playing.

Joe.—One eye is gone; where's that—fightin' tu?

Jas.—Fighting four; I was in the hands of four good men when that was gouged out.

Joe.—I guess you got licked.

Jas.—I stayed with them—I was the last man in the room.

Joe.—Oh, the Devil. Say, do ye want us both, and I won't fight unless you tell me—we'll both stay if ye say so.

Jas.—Very well; what are your names.

Ra.—Rachel and Joseph.

Joe.—Call me Joe; it's quicker.

Jas.—Rachael, you see to the kitchen; Joe, the wood, water and all chores.

Ra.—Terrible glad for the chance, for maybe you can find out our girl, Amy. Will you try.

Jas.—I will endeavor. Where was she at the last?

Ra.—There, that letter was the last; she forgot to date it, but the postmark was Sacramento. We sold our little; went all the way from Jarsey there; couldn't find her; put her name in the Sacramento *Union;* she must be dead, for she was a great reader. But we can't give her up until we find out, dead or alive. Will you help? Our money is all gone; we have been most everywhere. Say, will you try hard?

Jas. Yes; leave the letter with me. I'll do for the best.

Joe. Boss, you study the letter hard; don't lose it, and see if ye can find out, either dead or alive, and you'll find me a bully Joe, without fightin'. (*Exit Joseph and Rachael*)

Jas.—(*To himself Looks at letter.* My God, is it possible! Bayley's P.O. effaced by Sacramento stamp! It is true, I believe, but I must hush until due time, fearing obstructions to favorable developments with the villain. If it is her that sleeps beneath the violets o'er the brook! Hush! I say. Hush! Hush! And what a blessing if the orphan gets her own! Oh hush! or self-spoiled plot.

Enter RUTH, ELIZA, RACHAEL AND JOSEPH.

Ru.—(*Jasper's head bowed, absorbed in thoughtful meditation. Arouses*) What shall I say to Nellie? She is at the back door, and wants me to ask you if she is coming here to live. The old lady that stays with her nights in the cabin is all packed waiting for the Georgetown stage. (*Stage horn blows*) and she hates to stay alone. She first asked if you had taken the place; when I said yes she jumped and clapped her hands—then said as I have told you.

Jas.—Call her in.

Nel.—(*Skipping in.*) Here I be! Be I coming? I be, hain't I? (*Smiling.*) She's gone. I heard the stage horn. Oh, say, be I?

Jas.—(*Affected.*) Yes, Nellie. Eliza, will you tidy those two bed-

rooms off the parlor next your's and aunt's. Give Nellie the front one and the other to Rachael and Joseph.

Joe.—Rachael, that's boss for the gal, and us too

Eli.—Shall I make any changes of furniture in her room? It's the best in the house.

Jas.—That's what I want No changes, only of linen thrice a week. Just step and do it at once, please. (*Exit Eliza.*) Joseph and Rachael, go with Nellie and bring all her little wares from the cabin, and Nellie, you bring me all old books and papers, will you, without disturbing?

Nel.—(*Elated.*) Yes, sir; but there ain't much of nothing. (*Exit Joseph, Rachael and Nellie.*)

Jas.—Ruth, there is a check for all I got, and it's plenty. Go to ready-made store; all of you dress fairly for the occasion, observing neatness, forgetting the idea, as you said, of being objects of charity her Alonzo. Send Nellie to Sabbath School and Ladies' School, and with you to church.

Ru.—Thanks. I will try that warbrobe parallels circumstances. But do you not need part of money to attire?

Jas.—My little bundle is better book than cover. And let me add, have all Nellie's mammy's clothing washed, ironed, folded and placed in her private draw, for no doubt they will be dear to her as mementoes. (*Exeunt all.*)

Curtain. Five minutes.

ACT II.

Enter JACK, *the Gambler.*

Jk. (*to Jas.*)—The new landlord, I believe. I heard you had taken the house and the orphan to live with you. I was glad, with the whole village, when we heard Nellie proclaim it,—to everyone she met, even to strangers. I guess Alonzo's going to give you a call. I saw him coming this way. (*Takes a seat.*)

Jas.—All right.

Enter ALONZO, *quick step.*

Al. (*to Jas.*)—I heard you took the place. (*Exit Jack*). Is that so?

Jas.—Yes.

Al.—Upon what terms? Are they for me to know?

Jas.—Equitable terms. The rest a secret, unless we disagree; then you are to adjust. *Exit Al*

Enter MERRILL.

Mer.—Have you given me all orders, not forgetting anything, for the manager keeps prompting me to all diligence.

Jas.—I think so. *Exit Merrill.*

Enter RUTH *and* NELLIE, *dressed as ordered.*

Jas.—Well, Nellie; got settled in room? How is it?

Nel.—Oh, it's so nice; sit rite by winder and see everything over the brook and all round, and such a nice bed—so soft. I have to get up to the bed now. 'Twas down to the blankets in the cabin; but 'tant no trouble. Oh! here is mammy's old Bible and some papers tied up, just as she left it. *Exit Nellie.*

Jas. (*to Ruth*)—When you were rehearsing the character of Alonzo, you said, "Sometimes weak minded and cowardly." What did you mean?

Ru.—Well, I have seen him when touching deal, in conversation, make a very weak effort in justifying his honesty, and I could see him writhe within himself with cowardice, as he had failed to accomplish hiding the villain. Oh! I fairly shudder when I think of your meeting him now, as you have taken Nellie.

Jas. He was in just before you.

Ru.—Did he ask any questions?

Jas.—There's a violation of your promise.

Ru.—Yes, the first and last.

Jas.—Then I'll answer. He said nothing of Nellie Just asked if I'd taken the place, and terms and went.

Ru.—Ah! I fear he went to meditate wrong.

Jas.—Well, let that be as it may. At the first meet, if you're present, school yourself to indifference.

Ru.—I shall try. But what shall I say if he confronts me with charges of wrong?

Jas.—Just say, I manage the Ruth House. (*Ruth reads a paper and sits.*)

Enter ELIZA.

El.—Sir, I was little excited then. What did you mean about changing linen thrice a week? Now I'll give due attention to order.

Jas.—My order or wish? Check everything to and from laundry. Permanents, change three times a week the bed linen, towels, daily. Transients (if any), bed linen every morning; towels, if soiled, every meal; table linen, every meal, for bread and tea or coffee are more palatable upon a clean cloth, than turkey, fowl and fishes upon a greasy map of the universe.

El. (*smiling*)—True, sir.

Enter MERRILL. *He and Eliza sit down and chat to themselves.*

Enter JOE *and* RACHAEL.

Jas.—What now, Joseph and Rachael? Anything wrong?

Joe.—Wrong, wrong. I guess not. Why, it's slick as a whit and gettin' slicker. If you'd just see her act

Jas.—See who act, Joe?

Joe.—See who act, Joe? Why, that gal Nellie. Why, she's a daisy. Rachael and I's awfully taken up with her. She just pitches in and works and helps Rachael, and talks more sense than heaps of folks that don't know nothing, and she talks and feels funny and tickled to death 'cause she's got here, and we're tickled, and what a darned shame she's been kept back so! By darn, boss, I know you'll du well here. You must du well, for the way you've dun for her. We call her our child in fun, and she don't seem to hate it, and we told her to call us father and mother, but she didn't seem that way. She said she'd see you and then see. (*Joseph and Rachael sit down.*)

Nellie, clean and chirpy. Bunch of violets.

Nel.—(*To Jasper.*) I thought I bring you some nice violets. I don't want to sell 'em to ye; I want to give 'em; maybe I can't stay here, and have to sell violets agin.

Jas.—Why, Nellie, what makes you say that?

Nel.—Joseph and Rachel called me their child, and said if Alonzo said first word agin me stayin' here he'd fix him, Joseph said. Oh, say! they want me to call 'em father and mother; it seems too much, but I like 'em; what shall I call 'em?

Jas.—How would uncle and aunt do? Uncle Joseph and Aunt Rachael sounds good, don't it?

Nel.—(*Laughing.*) Yes, it does; and I'l go and sit down and tel 'em.

Jas.—See here, Nelly; now when you see Alonzo, just keep still; see if he speaks first and don't be afraid. (*She listens attentively, nods assent, and goes to Joseph and Rachael; sits talks, and laughs.*)

Joe.—Say, Boss, ain't there 'most too many of us in here at once to look well for nice tavern? Hadn't we better go, some of us?

Jas.—(*Laughing.*) Not at all, Joe. It seems like home. Work all done? No harm in this, Joe, can you sing? I thought I heard you humming something kind o' sweet as you were clipping the lawn grass.

Joe.—Well, boss, I'll tell ye. Ever since I've been with the child, Nellie, its keeps our Amy in my mind, and as I was clipping the grass in the yard or lawn, my thoughts seem to run kindy on Amy, as though I was a poet, so I let it run, and I believe it's worth keepin', and if ever we find her I know she'd like it.

Jas.—Let's hear it, Joe.

Joe.—It's short, but it's all I'll sing, so don't ask me agin. If you'll promise not to ask me twice, I'll sing, 'cause I'm old, and once is all. Don't be mad.

Jas.—Just once, Joe.

Joe. -Boss, 'tain't right, is it, 'cause your workin' for folks, and it's your work to sing one little song, and do it best you can, to try and make him do more?

Jas. —Well, not overly pleasant. But you sing one short song, Joe, and that will do.

Joe. —

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

This life is composed
Of cloud and of sunshine;
No one can deny
The truth I declare.
But what heart is more clouded
Than the heart that is mourning
For the dear one that's wandered
In a strange land so far?

But the sunshine of hope,
With its beautiful azure,
Borne forth in due time,
To save from despair.
Oh, where then's our Amy,
On earth or in heaven?
We'll hope yet to meet her,
If perchance the afar.

Alonzo enters and they all rush out but Jasper.

Al.—Why this sudden departure? Can you account for this, sir?

Jas.—I will not attempt, sir.

Al.—Why not?

Jas.—Prudence forbids.

Al. —What kind of prudence?

Jas.—There's only one kind, and I wish you to exercise that with me; it is my due.

Al. —True; but why so sarcastic?

Jas. —Now, sir, I will tell you. I wish to have nothing to say or do with you, or anyone else, but what seems business or semblance. I shall be happy to meet you or anyone upon those conditions, for I am too far gone in years to spend time in prelude.

Al.—I like those ideas, and if I have anything to say, I shall have a business motive, and I would like to interrogate you, if you will consent. It's with motive to my own interest, and it shall not harm you

in the least. The questions would appear simple to many, but, for my gratification will you allow them?

Jas.—Yes; I'll allow you to start, but don't be offended if I whistle down brakes, wishing brevity.

Al.—I know you have taken the place, and is it true you have taken Nellie Page to live with you?

Jas.—Yes.

Al.—What induced that?

Jas.—Necessity.

Al.—On whose part?

Jas.—Both.

Al.—Explain better.

Jas.—Can't.

Al.—Would you, if you could?

Jas.—Couldn't, if I would.

Al.—How long is she to stay?

Jas.—Don't know.

Al.—How long do you think?

Jas.—Don't think.

Al.—Who pays her board?

Jas.—No one yet.

Al.—Who do you expect?

Jas.—Don't expect.

Al.—Who may pay it?

Jas.—You, if you want to.

Al.—Why should I pay it?

Jas.—I didn't say you should I said you might if you wanted to.

Al.—What do you think of this girl, Nellie?

Jas.—I think her an orphan.

Al.—What else?

Jas.—Nice child; worthy of food, raiment and schooling.

Al.—Who's going to do all that?

Jas.—Someone is liable.

JOE *and* RACHAEL *enter.*

Joe. (*to Al.*)—Say, you're the chap that's so mean to the orphan. I know ye.

Al.—Easy, old gent. You seem to be angry.

Joe.—I'm goin' to lick ye. You're sure to get it when I'm little full.

Jas.—Joe, I'm surprised at you. This man and I were talking. You are doing wrong. (*Alonzo sits.*)

Ra.—Joseph, come away. (*Exit Joseph and Rachael.*)

Enter JACK.

Jk.—Landlord, what's your rates? I want board and room

Jas.—I fear the rates will not please the local. The rates must be high in order to sustain management.

Jk.—Perhaps you object, as I am called a gambler.

Jas.—Not so, sir. I have catered through life a considerable to that class, and found it all I could wish, both in remuneration and civility.

Jk.—Then you are not opposed to gambling?.

Jas.—It would be folly to oppose the whole world, for it is but a gamble.

Jk.—Then if I don't find fault with rates, will you give me board and room? (*Seat.*)

Jas.—Yes, sir. If you approve of rates and discipline.

Joe.—Now, boss, this don't look square on your part I stood and listened. You said you liked gamblers. Now I believe gamblers want to get a chance to kill or steal Nellie off, 'cause she ain't got no friends.

Jas.—No, no, Joe. You go and call her.

NELLIE *enters.*

Nel.—Well, sir (*running to Jasper*).

Jas.—Joseph thinks I want to do you wrong, and that I am talking with those gentlemen to give them a chance to kill or steal you away. Do you think we or'ter do wrong? Tell us what you think.

Nel.—Why, what for? I never done wrong to any of you And I know that $2 you give me didn't hurt me. And these clothes didn't hurt me. That nice room up stairs where I can sit and see mammy's grave don't hurt me, and for going to both schools and church, and all these, don't hurt. And, Uncle Joseph, you musn't say that; don't like a good old man, or I can't call you uncle and feel good, and it might send me away and make me hungry, and if I go I got to leave these clothes. I want to stay and help Aunt Rachael and go to school maybe by-and-by do some good so's to pay for all these nice things. Now, Uncle Joseph, don't talk so any more. You'll make folks mad at me. (*Quickly turning to Alonzo, his head bowed.*) Did you speak to me? I thought you did.

Al.—No, I did not; but I will. Come here, Nellie. Poor child that I have wronged. Nellie, will you forgive me? You don't know all the suffering I have caused you, but if I will do right from this will you forgive me?

Nel.—Yes, sir; and will you speak, and may I speak to you when I see you?

Al.—Yes, dear child, and more than that. (*Turning to Jasper.*) And now, sir, you go on in your philanthropy toward Nellie, and as regards board, clothing and schooling, as you described in our dialogue, I am the liable. That dialogue, simple as it was, was a gracious boon unto me. I have more to tell you when I see you again, which shall not be long. Adieu. (*Exit Al.*)

Jas.—Well, Joe, how does that look?

Joe. Look; can't tell. I'll bet it's taffy.

Jas.—Now, Joe, I want you to apologize to Jack.

Joe.—Jack, may I ask your pardon?

Jk. (*smiling*)—Yes, Joe, that's all right. *Exit Joe and Nellie.*

Jas.—Jack, Alonzo seems touched.

Jk —Poor fellow's got to quit. Doc. Sherman says can't stay long and I guess he's going to square things right. Cost him right smart money to square good, and I guess the beauty of the square will be no hypocrite.

Jas. Jack, did you ever see him act or talk this way before?

Jk.—I am giving it to you right,—he's quittin'. Never see him lay down before. I tell you, when Nellie gave her little talk, it melted his icy heart, and I'll bet no more frost *Exit Jack and Jas.*

Enter MERRILL *and* ELIZA.

Eli.—Ah, Merrill, why so downcast?

Mer.—Eliza, I was thinking the cruelty of fate and stings of poverty, insomuch I have about concluded to lay my position before the manager of our house, explain all and and ask counsel. What do you think of it?

Eli. (*sighing*)—As you will, Merrill.

Mer.—I will. *Exit Merrill and Eliza.*

Enter RUTH *and* JASPER.

Jas.—Well, Madame, the meeting of Alonzo and myself, you so much dreaded, has occurred, and it excels ordinary hope, but Nellie, perchance, played injured innocence beautiful and effective.

Ru.—Yes, but Joe says it's but mere pretense.

Jas.—Well, the only plan,—court patience, step carefully on and off the wheel of circumstances, so's not to throw it out of true.

Ru.—Was Jack, the gambler, asking board and room?

Jas.—Yes, but please omit the name gambler, for I'm sure he merits more than that title. Besides, speaking of a person when absent should be named just as they should be when present. In this slight lecture don't be offended.

Ru.—Too true to be offensive. What I was going to say about him, he applied to us for board and room, but prudence forbid. When he gets affected with drink he is silly enough to declare an affection for me, and one day I was telling him when sober of his foolish remarks, and the poor fellow entertains the idea in sobriety. Hence comes the enquiry.

Jas.—I told him if he approved of my rates and discipline, I should be happy to cater to his wants. I th'nk him a man of more than average principle.

Ru. (*laughing*)—Why, sir, do you imagine I scorned a good offer?

Jas.—It is not my business to imagine your business, but I would like you not to forget or overlook true value.

Ru.—Quite right, but I fear you are placing too much value to the credit of Alonzo's conscience. My opinion coincides with Joe's. Nothing but pretensions; but I shall make no disclosures. But for to relieve an anxious and troubled mind, that all the gold that Greenwood Valley and all other valleys ever yielded, would fail to give this relief. If you had it in your power to relieve the aforementioned, would you grant it?

Jas.—Yes.

Ru.—Do you remember that? (*pulling letter from her bosom*).

(*Jasper looking at letter and handing it back—then gazing at Ruth in silence.*)

Ru.—Do you? Why that silent gaze? Answer, will you?

Jas.—Yes, I will answer the best I can. Ruth, time and circumstances tend to efface memory, and I know of no better way than to let the letter answer all questions. And I had rather defer discussing this until this patient, trying undertaking with Alonzo, the villain, is concluded. I do not know how to carry more burden. And as you have an interest in the undertaking, let reason defer this matter. It would be better for all.

Ru.—No, that is not my opinion, and as the subject has been broached, I insist upon disposing of it or—

Jas.—Or what, Ruth? You promised no frustration.

Ru.—Nor will I. But Kit told me you were a widower now, and I was hopeful you might listen to my entreaties.

Jas.—Were I to listen to your entreaties you would certainly be doomed, for when you became convinced I merely yielded to your entreaties, and stoical in affection; too late you would curse the influence of listening to entreaty.

Ru.—All of this is of no avail. I cannot bring myself to reconciliation. I have exercised all within me to no effect. The letter says, although not in words, but I hope.

Jas.—There is nothing worded in the letter that justifies; it rather forbids such frantic –

Ru.—I presume you charge me with wrong for premature affection when I was innocent of your being a married man. Heaven knows it is no wrong, and unto heaven I impute it as an inspired infusion. So be careful in your charges, for my heart is free from guile.

Jas.—I do not wish to make charges, but I beseech you to drop this, fearing something may occur that you, Eliza, and poor Nellie may not get your own.

Ru.—What about yours?

Jas.—I only wish yours was as safe as mine. Hearing of the villain's whereabouts and of his illness, I fixed safety in law to give him a chance, then, I took the widows' and orphans' case with no law in their favor, or hope, unless obstructions are kept clear.

Ru.—I do not want or expect the first cent, neither will I allow you to draw my mind that way in order to evade the subject that I am determined, if possible, with you to conclude.

Jas.—Be brief, and let reason rule.

Ru.—Do you blame me?

Jas.—Only for self-delusion.

Ru.—Then why trifle with my affections?

Jas.—I do not.

Ru.—Then give me the reason why I am unworthy of you.

Jas.—For heaven's sake listen. You misconceive and I am forced to self-humiliation. Just look and see yourself wedded to a man far your senior in appearance, in a very short time he sitting around in the way; from infirmity a poor, helpless old creature, and you his wife. Now listen—deprived of society, subject to calumny and gossip, and still more subject to curse the day I listened to your entreaties. Thus you see it is not in you the unworthy rests but in me.

Ru.—Your argument says misfortune is mine.

Jas.—But, listen. I become a participant, sharing, and the more patiently you endure, the more my condemnation, for sorry you must be and liable to curse, I say again, the listening to entreaty. So, Ruth, awake from this long, delusive dream. Thank heaven for your well sustained Dianna. Look upon me only as an elder brother; and the more you look, the more you'll see.

Ru. (*countenance bespeaking conviction*)—Will you promise not to marry, for I can only see you as you were.

Jas.—No. But I will promise this. If I should ever intimate or show inclination to wedlock, that reason would not give consent, I will listen to your reasonable admonishings and deem it a sisterly favor.

Ru.—Were I to meditate matrimony with another, would you feel an interest?

Jas.—Yes, a heartfelt interest, wishing you might find due reciprocation of affection, for without, it's a bitter cup to sip.

Enter MERRILL.

Mer.—A telegram from our manager, asking your opinion of Alonzo's manifestations. What will be the reply, sir?

Jas.—Symptoms of favorable symptoms. *Exit Merrill, bowing.*

Enter JOE *and* RACHAEL.

Ru.—If Jack wants board, don't refuse him on my account. (*Jasper smiling and nodding and shaking head.*) *Exit Ruth.*

Ra.—I thought we might ask if you had got any encouragement to give us about our girl. Don't be angry. Joseph seems to think there is no hope here, and if it was not for the little comfort that Nellie affords us, we would almost think we had better move on to some other place. Not from any unkindness of anyone about the place, but Joseph seems so uneasy I scarce know what to do.

Joe.—Yes, boss, I'm 'fraid I'll have to take a little O B Joyful, if it does give me headache, 'Caus it seems no use hoping to find her. What do you think?

Jas.—Well, I will say this. I do believe you would be doing wrong to go away, for, although I say nothing, there is no one in this country that can have a better chance or is more determined to find your daughter, dead or alive, than I, and if I should have to give up, I will tell you, and then you can have your choice to stay here or wander. And, Joseph, I want you to promise me you won't drink, for it will confuse our place, mar Nellie's affection for you, be sorrowful for Rachael and will rack your brain; and, believe me, I will leave no stone unturned in trying to find your lost one.

Ra.—Now, Joseph, that's nice. We have done wrong; let's cheer up and be content

Joe.—All right, boss, we will, and I won't touch the darned stuff. I'm glad you told me that way. *Ex. Joe and Rachael.*

Enter MERRILL *and Jack*

Jk.—Would you be offended, landlord, if I offer to pay half of Nellie's board?

Mer.—And I will deem it a favor if you will allow me to pay the other half.

Jas.—Gentlemen, why would you think it a favor?

Jk.—I think it my duty.

Mer.—Those are my sentiments.

Jas.—A noble reason, boys, and as you wish an answer, do not charge me with wrong as I decline, but at some future period I hope to be able to explain satisfactorily the reason.

Mer. I think I see the reason, and it is just. Poor Nellie was struggling with want; we let her go unheeded, partly from carelessness and fearing Alonzo, and you have courage to play the philanthropist, and you don't wish another to meddle your part, and you are right.

Jk.—O. K. landlord. But don't be afraid to ask Jack for a scad as long as I have it. I've got a mule load now. I touched Ike and Old Sam's Spanish monte biz right smart. Let me tell you something, landlord. I've been in this country ever since '49; I've went broke a heap; win cords of money for myself and Alonzo; he kep' his—mine blowed in. Now I got two things at once that always kep' apart, that is money and quit. Now I play quit, game and drink, sure.

Jas.—You got the best of bank, did you?

Jk.—You bet. $7,000, and don't owe a cent.

Jas.—That's nice turn now-days.

Jk.—Very good, and what makes it a daisy 'twas a fluke. Old Sam 'sposed 'Lonzo's standin' in, but 'Lonzo's done. I had a little, $340; it's all I had in the world. I stood around, took up my belt couple holes, made 'em skip the brace, and, sir, I pitched in; they come my way (they sweat); I pressed, still they run for me; I crowded the mourners, and they closed the game, and it panned out as I told you. But I tell you they make a devish kick when they found out what chances they took agin so little money. Biggest win I ever made on so small a stake, but I nearly beat it once in Coloma. In '52 I was worryin' agin bank; Alonzo was in and stood by; we dropped heavy; Alonzo weakened, and I was busted. The dealer gave me $10 in checks for my Kansas toothpick; game only run an hour and a quarter; I cleaned up $615. I was always pleased with my nerve in losing—any fool can stand winning. But I'm done now, and here goes to be saving. Did you ever gamble, landlord?

Jas.—Yes. I tried it, some; had to quit, fearing its fascinations.

Jk. Quit easy?

Jas.—No; but after I struck the right plan, no trouble.

Jk. How's that. What's the right plan?

Jas. – Quit good, and stay quit.

Jk. – That's it, and I'll do it to a whack. (*Exit.*)

Enter ALONZO.

Al.—*To Jas.* Well, landlord, I thought I'd give you a call. The last time I went away feeling better. Do you have good health?

Jas.—Remarkably good, sir.

Al. – I wish I could say that.

Jas. – How is your neck, sir?

Al – No pain scarcely, only of mind, and that seems little reconciled. I think I fret too much. I must try and cultivate philosophy.

Jas.—Yes, mankind is more inclined to murmur than to submit peacefully.

Al. – Unto whom are you alluding?

Jas.—I am more inclined to fret at my lot than to consider how much worse I might be than I really am. (Such is human frailty.)

Al.—Mary I ask you the cause of your varying so much at times in your style of language?

Jas.—What, in meaning or words?

Al—In words.

Jas.—No, I can't tell the reason. Don't make any difference, does it?

Al.—I don't know that it does, but nice language is sweet to the ear.

Jas.—May be honey to the ear but gall to the brain.

Al.—Where were you educated in youth?

Jas.—Log school house and at home by firelight.

Al.—Are you well educated?

Jas.—I don't think so.

Al.—Why?

Jas.—Because there are some ideas advanced by the great and learned that the old school house says no.

Al.—I don't mean general reasoning of the day. What was your principal study or greatest fancy?

Jas.—Most pleasing through life is to admire the truth and beauties of proportion, for as we give proportionately we'll receive.

Al.—When and how are we to know to invest?

Jas.—Plenty of chances to do unto others as we'd have them do unto us.

Al.—Do you profess to do all this?

Jas.—It would be a very empty profession, I fear

Al.—How do you distinguish right from wrong?

Jas.—There is only one way for all - true conscience.

Al.—Please tell what you think of true and untrue conscience, and how they are to be known; in full, and all pertaining thereto, will you?

Jas.—No; ain't got time here.

Al.—Well, condense, and give the distinguish.

Jas.—Free conscience, when rules, known by truth; the other, known at a glance, being self-made. This has been taught for ages.

Al.—Ah! and how poorly remembered. It is truth; I was taught this in my youth. (*Bows head and acts the penitent Exit Jasper.*)

Enter RUTH.

Ru.—How do you do, sir?

Al. (*raising head*)—No just reason to complain, only an occasional twinge in my neck. How does the new landlord get on?

Ru.—He seems attentive and remains in the office right steady. I think him strict on discipline, and that from close study and fine drawn lines.

Al.—Then you really think him a hotel man?

Ru.—Yes, sir; I thank him that, for in five minuies' dictating he outstripped my knowledge, and it only seemed preface to a volume. But I think all of us as help will have to mind our individual cues, for his mere walking through the apartments in silence seems to declare time and place, imperatively.

Al.—In all my life I don't know that I ever came in contact with such a specimen of humanity. I have been questioning him to my utmost; his answers are queer, but right. I suppose you don't know his financial position?

Ru.—No, that would be quite out of place for me to ask him. But if you should, and he tells you, would it be asking of you too much to tell me, for I find him such that I have promised myself to avoid questions?

Al.—The next interview I shall endeavor to ascertain, and if successful I will inform you, but I think him a person not to worship money. Nellie is living with him and I am glad of that. This may reasonably surprise you, and as we are talking it gives me an opportunity, Ruth, to ask if the injured feelings you entertain towards me are of such a character that cannot be repaired?

Ru.—They are repairable, but, Alonzo, do not be offended when I tell you, I do not wish, if repairs are being made, that my brain should feel the thud of hammer, or heart lacerated afresh with harsh sawings of the repairer. Do you understand me? (*with emphasis.*)

Al.—I do. (*Exit Ruth. To himself.*) Ah, I see; she wants her wrongs repaired without ceremony, that her sorrows may not be renewed. My restitutions must be through the hands of another—the landlord. (*Enter* ELIZA.) Oh, Eliza! I am glad to see you. It couldn't have happened better.

El.—You look brighter, and I hope you feel more encouraged.

Al.—Let that be as it may, Eliza. But I feel like telling you, I have done you a great wrong, as well as your aunt, and as it's an amalgamation, I would like to know how to act in adjusting, that if possible I might enjoy your temporal forgiveness.

El.—Well, sir, I would be sorry to hold hardness when penitence and restitution existed, and I will leave the matter between you and aunt and when you think, think of us as one. (*Exit Eliza.*)

Enter JOSEPH.

Jo.—(*To Alonzo.*) What the devil you doin' here? You look sick enough to skin. Devil's fixin' his knife now to skin ye. He'll do it, too. He's boss skinner. You'll find it out, too. You think you're smart here, but when he gits holt of ye, you'll quit like a steer.

Al.—Joe, I beg of you to quit.

Joe.—Quit! Why didn't you quit before you begun to do wrong to that poor, starving orphing? Why, when I think how pitiful she looked when you made her sit down, and hunger tearing her all to pieces (*jumping tow'rds him, but keeping safe distance*) I believe I'll give ye one. Put up your fins; I'm on the plug (*dancing round and striking out into vacuum*). Take ye by the head,—wring that darned sore neck of yours. Make it ache like a stun bruise. (*Alonzo appears melancholy and calm, but not frightened at Joe,—only exemplifying inward sorrow*).

JASPER *enters.* JOE *standing like fight.*

Jas. (*catching Joe by arm*)—What do you mean, sir?

Joe.—I mean, if I had little in me, I could lick him or anybody 'd take his part.

Jas.—I'll take his part; and I guess you won't want more than one Kanuck racket, Joe.

Joe.—Kanuck! What's that? — Knuckles? — Steel knuckles? That's enough; I guess Rachael wants me (*bespeaking cowardice*) *Ex. Joe, quick.* *Enter* NELLIE.

Nel.—Here is some violets for both of you (*splitting bunch and giv-*

ing to Alonzo and Jasper. Alonzo receives feelingly. She says to Alonzo:) Keep them wet, and tell me if they wilt, and I'll give you more. I have lots of violets now.

Al. (*bowing assent*)—Going to school now, Nellie, are you?

Nel.—Yes, sir.

Al.—What do you study?

Nel—Kindy learnin' over what I forgot, that mammy learned me; catechism and some more lessons. I begin to write nice, Miss Farnsworth, the teacher, says, and I'm studying the language of flowers. Next Monday I'll be picked up so I'll go into class; then I'll be glad. Good by, sir. *Exit Nellie.*

Al.—Landlord, I would like the privilege of asking you a few more questions. They are upon your own matters, apparently, and, believe me, sir, I feel an interest in you as a stranger, and if you will allow me to interrogate you reasonably, I will deem it a favor; and if perchance I o'er step reason's line, check me.

Jas.—It's to be square cut, is it?

Al.—Yes, sir.

Jas.—Go!

Al.—You are from Canada, I believe?

Jas.—That's right.

Al.—Your parentage?

Jas. (*hesitates*)—My father's Irish, from Balamena, county Antrim; mother, from State of New York, Dutchess county, Quaker Hill.

Al.—Your most important pursuits, and their results?

Jas.—Most important pursuits (*hesitates*); building castles in the air, all summer. Results (*hesitates*),—wintering in them.

Al.—I should conclude you have not made much money, then.

Jas.—Yes, plenty.

Al.—Where is it?

Jas.—Gone.

Al.—Where?

Jas.—Where the woodbine twineth.

Al.—And you came to this country to make money?

Jas.—Yes; thought I might get it.

Al.—And you thought the hotel business best?

Jas.—Thought it best for a starter.

Al.—You do not think too much of money, I should imagine.

Jas.—Not enough, sometimes.

Al.—I wish I had known you better before you took this place. I

have some business I wish done, and I prefer a stranger. Can you adjust accounts?

Jas.—Yes, if books k pt square.

Al.—If kept lawfully but not equitably, how would you manage, sir?

Jas.—That would be easily managed if I had the fellow around to answer questions.

Al.—Will you sell out here and work for me awhile?

Jas.—No, won't sell, but I'll do work if you bring it here.

Al.—I will pay you well.

Jas.—The pay is all right, but you see I took this place, thinking it for the best, and I am going to stay right here until I see what it amounts to, and when I'm convinced it's no good I'll quit it if I have to saw wood. Can't you tell me what you want done? If it's crooked don't want any books. You just condense things in your mind, and act as though jump accounts. I've done that when things got crooked and mixed, and both thought it went slick. You think it over and we'll talk it. I'll warrant Joe won't meddle with you any more. Did you see him quit when I mentioned Kanuck? He thought it meant steel knuckles. He's coward.

Al.—Yes, I was amused at his shrinking. But the enmity he manifests I now approve of, and were he to strike me for my cruelties toward Nellie, I should have to receive it as right.

Jas.—That may all be, but he's silly, and its a question if you are just in thinking the animal taunts of man to be encouraged produces anything else but a sorrowful hindrance to the beauties of truth. And in my judgment there is no worse bane on earth than a vain, self-elected judge and his verdicts upon fellow-man. There is no enduring it and live but by philosophy, for such is man.

Al.—Thanks, sir. My neck is not feeling so well, and I just wish to say, don't mention our talk. But I have something for you to do in preparing for my journey. I will see you again.

Jas.—You mentioned a journey; when you going?

Al.—Cannot definitely say. I have some business to transact for I may not return. (*Exit Jasper and Alonzo, violets in hand.*)

Enter MERRILL *and* ELIZA, *after a stroll.*

Mer.—I feel invigorated from the influence of the stroll, Eliza, you hold up hope so beautifully to my sadness. Every interview makes you dearer to me. It equals zephyr breezes to a fevered brow, and as you say, if they do not give charitable counsel to my submission, we

will launch our bark upon Hymen's stream, 'midst the cheering sunshine of Hope, casting off Poverty's fear, feeling fully persuaded where there's a just will, will be made a good way.

Eli.—Bravo, Merrill! That's the language of a man that is worthy of a wife. And may heaven aid me in enhancing connubial felicity.—*Exit, apart, in silence.* *CURTAIN.*

ACT III.

RUTH *and* JASPER.

Rut.—Well, sir; this must be a dream I am undergoing. It is impossible that Alonzo has intimated restitution. Are you aware of that and not inform me? If so, are you doing us justice?

Jas.—Hark woman! and hush those dyspeptic questions. Let me ask, do you think it possible the brain that is exercised to its utmost capacity in trying to loosen the hand that hold servile chains upon the helpless and innocent, and that brain had placed a watchful eye and prayed for semblance of success, and that semblance began to appear, in so much that the cruel hand began to relax, do you think the brain so dull or the eye so dim as not to greet those indications with due recognition? No. And, again, would prudence admit of anything but patience, secresy and reflective diligence, that hope of design might be accomplished?

Rut.—I see and acknowledge my inconsistency and violation of promise I made you that if you appeared indolent or meditating, to ask no questions concerning Alonzo.

Jas.—I know you can hardly credit the encouraging indications, but, for mercy's sake, school yourself. Breathe no thought aloud; try and duplicate unrippled waters.

Rut.—Why was I so foolish? *Exit Ruth.*

Enter JOE *and* RACHAEL.

Rac.—Any word? Dead or alive?

Jas.—Not sufficient to say much, but, for your satisfaction, I believe I am on the right track. But I want you to be patient; if not, it would be a hindrance to my pursuits.

Rac.—We must, and will, and we are thankful for the hope, hain't we, Joseph?

Joe.—Yes. Say, boss, can I do anything to help?

Jas.—Yes. Be civil to Alonzo; he is ill, and to annoy him is hurtful many ways; and, Rachael, I wish you to labor with Joseph. This

being duly done, would not only be doing Alonzo justice, but, I think, would assist me in seeing my plot successful.

Joe. By Gosh, if that's the case, boss, I'll keep out his sight, and if he comes in, I'll get out. Will that suit ye?

Jas.—Yes; that will suit.

Joe.—Say, boss, was you going to fight me, time I was going to plug him in the nose? Darn, you looked as though you'd lick a whole tribe of Comanches. I'm going to tell ye, let's not fight ourselves, let's fight for one another, and anybody you can't lick, I'll catch his leg and flop him under. Then you give him some your knuckles. What is that, steel knuckles?

Jas. (*laughing*) Nonsense, Joe. Kanuck means a man from Canada.

Joe. (*nods assent*) – Yes. I don't see it that way. *Ex. Joe and Rachael. Enter* JACK.

Jk.– Ho, landlord! How do you head?

Jas.—Due east, Jack. Any news?

Jk.—I was just talking Dr. Sherman. Alonzo had asked him if there was any possible chance for the Doctor's being mistaken. When he told him no, he seemed cool and undisturbed.

Jas.—That's good sign, Jack. *Ex. Jasper.*

Enter RUTH.

Jk.—Well, mistress, quite a while since I met you. Are you well? You must be, for you look splendid.

Rut.—(*Courteously.*) Yes, thanks; and I am pleased to see you looking so hale. The last time I saw you, you looked haggard, and the very picture of dissipation, Why, you don't seem the same person.

Jk.—Well, I'm not the same in many respects. I have taken timely rest, due exercise, and abandoned drink. Hence the change.

Rut.—I am exceedingly glad to hear this. Now, if you would abandon the gambling table you are liable to a bright future, but let me add, do not quit game from my saying only – it must originate from principle to be truly effective. Excuse freedom.

Jk. Your freedom is relishable. It needs no excuse, for it makes avenue to a subject that I hardly knew how to approach. Ruth, you know I have intimated ere this that I entertained a fondness for you. True, sometimes under the influence of wine, and sometimes half joking, I have made those allusions. But now, without wine or joke, and in honorable and pure intentions do I make this allusion. Do not think I make this from the influence of a surfeited school boy love, but as based upon reason. Your answer.

Rut.—The answer you will not expect as from a timid, palpitating heart of a school girl, nor as from one that has not passed life thus far without labyrinth of cloud and sunshine. I admire your candid frankness; it merits more than I can give, and the answer must be no.

Jk.—Why, are you engaged? If so, I apologize and withdraw; or is it my gaming? I have quit that—not from pretence but principle. Now will you confide in me sufficient to give the reason of no? But let me say again: Perhaps my financial position is a barrier. If so, I have a cash balance on hand, the result of last game, and I never made a winnings with so little chagrin; they were the right men to capture; and if you will not think I am courting you with gold, let me tell you, the balance on hand is $7,000, no great amount to boast of. but that with your's and Dame Fortune's smiles, judiciously managed in business, might yield an abundance; and again, will you confide and let me understand why no?

Rut.—I will confide reasonably. Listen! I sought an engagement, but failed from self-delusion. The object sought I cannot exercise reason sufficient to remove from my mind, but what delusive hopes yet surrounds me, but I hope you can exercise more reason toward me than I can toward him, and will you abandon?

Jk.—Yes, pity demands an abandonment. But I certainly think you are liable to self-wrong by clinging to an affection when the object only yields ingratitude. May I ask his name, and where he is? Also, can I say or do anything, for man can sometimes read man's intentions better than women, and with your consent I offer my judgment, but it's a poor judgment without evidence on both sides.

Rut.—I cannot now tell you where he is.

Jk.—Will you tell me who he is?

Rut.—Yes; he was called, Canada, the Gardener, long ago.

Jk.—What! On Garden Ranch?

Rut.—Yes.

Jak.—Why, that's the man that Alonzo robbed at Murderer's Bar. Kit often spoke of him. I have seen Kit shed tears in telling of the Gardener having to go home to his family poor. He was a married man, Ruth, and from what Rit said, I thought him honorable.

Rut.—He was honorable; he treated me as such; never hinted affection; our acquaintance was brief and casual; I became smitten and wrote him. It seems a long, tedious dream, that I cannot awake from.

Jk. Did he answer your letter, to encourage?

Rut.—I doubt if any person could discern encouragement but me, and I fear that originates from wish. I think he was at San Francisco,

and, if I am not mistaken, this landlord is here. Oh, I came too near. (*dropping head*).

Jk.—Ruth, confide in me I see you need help, and I am certain that any offerings as help I make shall not have the least tinge of self.

Rut. –Am I talking to one that will abandon all hope of me as consort, and when I say so, to only be an ordinary acquaintance? If you are such, I want your aid; if not, from this the ordinary acquaintance.

Jk.—I abandon, seeing it as it is. Were I not to abandon, I would duplicate you in cherishing delusive hope. Any reasonable aid I can render, to gratify, I am at your will.

Rut.—You are happy to abandon so easily. But had you been fascinated at eighteen, not so easy. Please ask the landlord if the Gardener has an affection for anyone at home, and thanks for offering aid. Let me see how.

Jk.—Is the letter too sacred to read?

Rut.—I will read; listen. Will you read, please? (*weakening*).

Jk. (*reading aloud*):

GARDEN RANCH, Tuesday Ev'ng.

MISS RUTH,—

Your surprising note, per stage-driver, came duly. You ask a reply, which is the least I can do. You ask for pity, which I give. You declare an affection, hence the surprise, for I never dreamed you entertained such an idea. I never advanced a sentiment that had not virtuous and legitimate semblance, and that as become a married man; for I have a wife and two children at home, and, let me act as I may, my affection for them cannot be exceeded, unless by excelled intellect. And you will say with me, I never hinted otherwise.

With all due respect, THE GARDENER.

Well, Mrs., it's a dilemma; but, with your consent I will question the landlord. He seems truth and frankness.

Rut.—Will you be the same with him?

Jk.—Yes, or I would soon be checked. He's detective. *Ex. Ruth.*

Enter JASPER.

Jk.—Landlord, if I understand, you are not meanly secretive.

Jas. –I should hope not.

Jk. –I wish to ask you a few questions; if I intrude, check.

Jas.—That's fair. Don't strain chance.

Jk. –Did you see a man at the Bay that christened Garden Ranch?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk.—Have you known him long?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk. –Is he liable to visit the mountains?

Jas. –Yes.

Jk. - Will he be here ?

Jas. —Yes.

Jk.—Is there any person in Greenwood Valley he esteems ?

Jas. – Yes.

Jk. – More than one ?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk. —If I promise due secresy to answers, can I go on?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk. —Are you here upon his business ?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk.—With Alonzo?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk.—Did Kit Welch write the Gardener ?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk.—Do you know that Ruth has a tender regard for the Gardener?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk.—Do you think he remembers her ?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk.—He was a married man ?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk.—Is he a widower now ?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk.—Does he intend to remain so ?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk.—Has he an affection for any one at home ?

Jas. —Yes.

Jk.—Ardent ?

Jas.—Yes.

Jk.—What is her name ?

Jas.—Check, you said if you went too far. (*Exit Jack.*)

Enter Joe.

Joe.—Boss, I want to talk a little.

Jas —All right, Joe, what is it? Hurry up.

Joe.—What wages you going to give us ? 'Bout time we made a bargain, 'cause I guess you, Nellie, Rachael and I's got to run this ranch pretty soon, that'll be slim crew. Maybe you don't know what's going on. You're cute for one eye, but I tell you're liable to lose your housekeeper and chambermaid both.

Jas.—I guess they won't leave, Joe.

Joe.—Leave ! What do you take me for ? Don't you 'spose I know ? They have got a man picked out, both of 'em; they are right smart on the marry. Rachael says hold my tongue, but I don't, and if they quit we ought to have good wages. We can get along without

'em. I want to know how much. Come, you told me to hurry up. How much? Quick.

Jas.—How much do you think would be right?

Joe.—$30 if they stay, $40 if they go

Jas.—I'll stand that, Joe.

Joe. – Good enough; now go if they want to. Say, I guess there's a feller wants to buy ye out. Will ye sell?

Jas.—Not now, Joe. (*Exit Joe.*)

Enter JACK

Jk. – Landlord, have ye any idea when the Gardener will be here?

Jas.– He is liable to report himself most any time after the proper development of Alonzo.

Jh.—Have you any objection of me talking to Ruth our dialogue about the Gardener?

Jas.—No, only don't add or diminish.

Jk.—Your patience must be tried with Alonzo. Why don't you exercise the law, your case is good?

Jas. – He is ill, and I am in hopes he will do right without punishment, in the Gardener's case; and if he should, he might restore to the widow and orphan, that law cannot reach, and I am sure that would please the Gardener. Do you remember the Gardener?

Jk.—Only what Kit told me. I'll see him, I hope. *Exit Jack.*

Enter RUTH.

Rut.—Circumstances are such that possibly I might ask a holiday. It looks as though I might want to go to Sacramento. Have you any objections?

Jas. Not any; but I wish it would not occur at once.

Rut —Oh, no; I shall be able to give you notice sufficient to prevent any inconvenience, but I must study the time, so as not to be absent in busy season, or do you not care to have much business?

Jas.—No; I want no business more than I have. I just merely wish this house as a home for us all, hoping it will aid me in my undertaking with Alonzo, and this idea please keep secret.

Rut.—It shall be so. Was Jack talking, and did he mention my name?

Jas.—Yes; he mentioned your name when asking if I had any objection to his rehearsing to you part of our talk. I said no, and I thought I detected an inward satisfaction as I answered some of his questions, more especially those that involved the liability of a tender intimacy existing between you and the Gardener.

Rut —I suppose you denied that

Jas.—I thought of you as become a brother and answered.

Rut. I imagine all, sir (*rather frowning*).

Jas.—Who was that gentleman, Ruth, that went by on the mustang and called at Alonzo's, a little ago? Did you see him?

Rut. That was Ed. Lovejoy, the tenant of our old ranch. I think he is over to pay Alonzo the rent.

Jas. –I wish you were getting the rent.

Rut.—I wish Eliza and I had the cash value of the ranch. We neither of us wanted to live there after her father died. *Enter* ELIZA.

Rut.—I was just telling him it never seemed like home on Miner's Ranch after father died.

El.—No; I like it better here, but for poverty.

Jas —What is the ranch worth?

Rut.—I don't know, after what has happened. I wouldn't live on it to have it

El.—Neither would I. *Ex. Ruth and Jasper. Enter* MERRILL.

El.—Good news, Merrill; I know by your looks. Tell me; don't keep me in suspense.

Mer.—Yes, Eliza. Day is dawning, darkness fleeing, sunshine coming (*handing Eliza letter*). Read that

El.—You read it, Merrill.

Mer. Yes, Eliza. The manager writes thus:

DEAR SIR,—

I am happy to say your submission has been duly considered, and advise you to do as you wish. Your salary will be reasonably advanced. Wishing unmarred felicity in your important undertaking.

GEORGE, of WELLS FARGO.

Now, Eliza, one month from to-day will witness the result of our plitings, as we gathered wild flowers on the banks of the Sacramento. Do you remember?

El. –I remember, Merrill, and the memory is as fragrant as the emission of a bedewed bed of roses. *Ex. Merrill and Eliza, apart.*

(JASPER *in office*) *Enter* RACHAEL, JOE *and* NELLIE.

Rac.—We have all been over the brook watering the violets on Nellie's mammy's grave, and while we were there old Mrs. Farnsworth came to us and said she was so glad Nellie had so good a home. It seemed her mammy's greatest trouble, fearing Nellie would suffer, but said she committed her child to the care of Him that was a Father to the fatherless, and died.

Joe.—Boss, I tell you when that woman, the school-teacher's mother, was talking about Nellie and her mammy, and how Alonzo

punished them without a reason, it made me have cold chills, and I never want to hear so much agin. (*Exit Joe, wiping his eyes.*)

Rac. (*To Jas., melancholy.*)—I thought I would ask you if any tidings of our Amy.

Jas.—Yes, Rachael, and when I'm telling, you will exercise wisdom and school yourself into due submission to the will of Providence, for she is dead.

Rac. (*With bowed head and apron to her eyes, weeping.*)

Jas. (*Aside*).—Rachael weeping for her children.

Nel. (*Wiping her eyes with her apron.*)

Jas. (*Bowed head and tips of left hand fingers to forehead.*)

Rac.—And is it thus! (*One eye out from apron, sobbing.*) Did she leave any children? Oh, if I could only find any of her children! What a comfort! (*Starting off and stopping.*) Is there any children? Do tell me that I may tell Joseph.

Jas.—Yes, and the number I hope soon to be able to tell you. (*Exit Rachael.*)

Nel.—Poor old woman, I hope she will find some of Amy's children. I wonder where she is buried, and maybe the children's hungry. When will you find out more?

Jas.—Just as soon as I possibly can, Nellie, but I must wait for things to happen, or we might all be sorry. So when you are talking to Joseph and Rachael try and comfort them, and tell them when I get things certain I will manage so they shall go and see Amy's grave.

Nel.—Let me go with them and I will take lots of violets and set out on their girl's grave, and perhaps they will grow pretty as they did on mammy's. I'll go and talk them best I can. Oh, say; I wonder which hurts most—mammy losing her girl, or girl losing her mammy?

Jas. (*Head bowed.*)—Either is hard, Nellie. (*Exeunt.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

(*Enter* JACK *and* JASPER.)

Jk. (*to Jasper*).—Don't think me too inquisitive; but has this man Alonzo intimated anything to you as though he was going to leave Greenwood Valley?

Jas.—Well, nothing in particular; only, I heard him say there was no hope here for his affliction, and he was questioning in mind the influence of a Valparaiso climate, or the professional skill of Europe.

Enter ALONZO, *haggard looking.*

Al. (*to Jack*).—Are you in a hurry? I won't detain you long.

Jk.—I will listen, Alonzo.

Al.—I am thinking of making a trip to other climes and I may not return; I hated to go, Jack, without bidding you an affectionate farewell. (*Holding out hand.*)

Jk. (*taking hand.*)—Good-bye, Alonzo; I hope the change will be to your advantage. (*Takes seat and reads.*)

Enter MERRILL.

Al.—I am fixing for a journey, and I wish you to transfer my account to the house of Wells Fargo, San Francisco, as soon as convenient—say one week; that's ample time for all checks, &c., to be settled. I will leave a power of attorney for you to collect some ranch rents, and superintendency of my interest in the Gulch claim above Georgetown, and, perhaps, to do more. The business will all present itself at your office. Can you do this and extract remuneration without hindrance to other duties, and report monthly to head of firm?

Mer.—Yes, sir. (*Sits.*)

Al.—Landlord, I will be over in a little while. Will I find you here?

Jas.—Yes; this is my little place of business. (*exit Alonzo*) Mr. Merrill, I presume I can slip this injunction bridle without ceremony.

Mer.—Yes, sir; I am instructed—you to supersede. Do you wish to cancel the injunction?

Jas.—No. Slip no bridle until the mule is safe.

Mer.—Ah! (*reflective, and exit.*)

Jk.—He's going.

Jas.—Yes.

Jk.—Has he fixed the Gardener's business?

Jas.—No.

Jk.—Well, landlord, you have two hard games to play, and they both seem close at hand. I prefer being absent, for I would hate to see either one of them down you. I wish the Gardener was here.

Jas.—What two?

Jk.—Why, you certainly won't let Alonzo go taking his funds without squaring the Gardener, and this woman Ruth is clean gone on the Gardener. Oh, if you had seen her rave when I told her the part of our dialogue that intimated the Gardener had an ardent affection for a woman at home. She wept like a whipped child; told me to begone,

and never approach her only as an ordinary acquaintance, and as for you, she blames, saying you are but a parcel of black deception, and, if I understand, she charges you with the Gardener's non-reciprocation. I tell you in her rage she looked the beautiful gazelle, except in the mildness of eye. Her hair floated, her bosom heaved, her eyes flashed diamonds, her countenance pallid, and her voice and tongue of shrill-toned irony. You will have a hard fight, I fear.

Jas.—Let her fight, it won't last long. One can't fight much alone.

Exit Jack. *Enter* RUTH, *excited.*

Jas.—Why, Ruth, what's the matter? (*Looking over book cooly.*)

Rut.—Do not ask that question, sir, with such indifferent coolness! But let me ask you by what right did you make me a ninny, in so much as to fall a dupe to your fallacious arguments? I would have wagered kingdoms, empires, yea, worlds, upon your honor toward me, and what would have been the result—tell me?

Jas.—(*Gazing silently.*)

Rut.—Why not answer? Is your neck fevered within that you cannot cackle deception more, and me so foolish to allow your cackling to have more influence than the silver-tongued eloquence of a Webster or a Clay, for they could not have hushed me into the belief that your mature years contained nothing but forbiddance of my entreaties. O, foolish woman that I was twice—once to hope so vainly, and then to be soothsaid by you into the belief that you looked upon me with the affection of a brother, and then to find out you have one at home for whom you possess an ardent affection. Will that stand divine criticism? Surely you will think enough of me to answer.

Jas.—Yes.

Rut.—Yes what?

Jas.—Yes answer.

Rut.—Then do answer. (*Smoothing her hair.*) If I can only get you to talk. Will you talk?

Jas.—Yes; talk some when you get through.

Rut.—I wish to know how you can act a brother's part and not have told me of this.

Jas.—I would have told you had you asked.

Rut.—Will you now?

Jas.—(*Nodding.*)

Rut.—Upon your own argument, are you so silly as to have ardent affection, as you said to me, in a short time a helpless old creature? Don't you think if you should marry her sh'd rue?

Jas.—I don't think of marrying her. That would be silly.

Rut.—Why not?

Jas.—Why she is married, and got living husband.

Rut.—And you love another man's wife?

Jas.—Yes; I can't help it.

Rut.—For heaven's sake, do they live together?

Jas.—Yes.

Rut.—How long have you known her?

Jas.—Many years.

Rut.—Did you have an affection for her when she married?

Jas.—Yes.

Rut.—Now, to bring this to a climax. Which will you do, cease to look upon me as a sister, or abandon the affection for this woman?

Jas.—It would be cruel to abandon her.

Rut.—Why?

Jas.—She is my sister.

Rut.—What!

Jas.—She is my sister.

Rut.—You are a riddle. Why do you want to torment me so?

Jas.—Ruth, try not fret at effect before learning the cause.

Exit Ruth, bowing, apparently pleased with explanation.

Enter ALONZO.

Al.—Ah, I find it as I wished. You are alone?

Jas.—Alone.

Al.—May I ask you—

Jas.—Hold! I am tired being tossed around with questions. You should know there is a time and place when and where patience ceases to be a virtue. I know you are ill, and that has buoyed patience; but try and condense.

Al.—True; every word. Thanks for past patience; but will you endure me a little longer?

Jas.—I'll try.

Al.—May I ask, through your life, what has made the strongest demand for nerve power to sustain you?

Jas.—I don't understand your question.

Al.—Do you know what nerve is?

Jas.—I think so.

Al.—Well, then, in all your combats of life, what did you have to exercise the most nerve in order to pull through?

Jas. (*reflects a moment*)—Combatting with poverty.

Al.—Did you ever feel nerve-weak through sudden and unexpected developments?

Jas.—I have felt it shake.

Al.—Can you be so unnerved as to lose your reason?

Jas.—I should hope no.

Al.—I need not ask if you are honest?

Jas.—No.

Al.—Why?

Jas.—There's nobody honest clean through.

Al.—How is that?

Jas.—Well, some few you can't buy for money, but theyre sure to have some other darling object. Find out that, put it on for bait, angle nice,—sure to get them.

Al.—I have selected you in mind to assist me. I have wronged myself, in doing wrong to others, and a greater wrong, not to be discussed here. First (*taking out memorandum and pencil*), Nellie, in equity, owns Garden Ranch. It's a question, whether to assign the ranch, or give its equivalent in gold? What do you think? It's worth those figures (*showing*).

Jas.—Gold, deposited with Wells Fargo, as guardians, until mature age, is better for Nellie than the ranch.

Al.—Miner's Ranch in equity belongs to Ruth and Eliza I thought perhaps if you understood their minds, we might decide whether ranch or gold for them. Ruth told me she wanted to hear no sound in repairing. Now the ranch or those figures, what do you think, sir?

Jas.—Their minds would say those figures in preference to the ranch.

Al.—And this house is Nellie's. What do you say as to that—assign or gold?

Jas.—Gold; so that if Nellie lives to mature age she will find it well done; if don't live to go to nearest of kin. And let me suggest as Eliza is of age, the heir, Eliza, two-thirds, Ruth, the widow, one-third. Is that right?

Al—Yes, for it was Eliza's father I wronged. And now there are two more, Kentuck and Hoosier. Jack knows them; they are reformed gamblers; I think, living at Cherokee Ravine, Bute Co., $400 each; and poor Jack, I owe him $910, it was a hold out when dividing. And now, sir, to save poor mortals the sin of judging me a hypocrite, will you allow me to make those checks to your order, and you give them due place?

Jas.—No, you take those figures to Wells Fargo's man Merrill. He will judge no hypocrite, for he is sterling. You check to his order; he to order and certify deposits to their individual credits as per list; then ask him kindly to hand each their deposit receipts, not forgetting, the incorporated firm of Wells Fargo to be duly responsible as guardians for Nellie until she arrives at the age of twenty-one, and in case she does not survive said age next of kin to inherit. Mr. Merrill will be only too happy to do this; as I said, he will contradict hypocrisy.

Al.—Thanks, I will go and give him list with instructions, after we discuss one more subject. And just let me say, our mutual understanding far exceeds my anticipations, for I feared your displeasure upon knowing my crimes.

Jas.—This one more subject—is it amalgamated with those aforementioned?

Al.—No, sir; but it requires more nerve

Jas.—All right. Then, first thing to be done, square those per list. Bear to me a line from Merrill, duly intimating, and then to the nerve case.

Al.—I shall not be long. Oh, here is Mr. Merrill. Landlord, will you intimate to him? (*Giving Jasper the list.*)

Enter MERRILL.

Jas.—See here, Mr. Merrill. Make check for the aggregate. (*Merrill makes it in a second.*) You understand the individuals and amounts? (*Merrill nods.*) What do you understand for Nellie's safety, there?

Mer.—The incorporated firm of Wells Fargo to be her guardian until she arrives at the age of twenty-one. Proviso: In case her non-surviving said age, all her's goes to her nearest of kin.

Jas. (*To Alonzo*)—If that is right, sir, sign. (*He signs. To Merrill*) It is no harm for me to make intimation. You understand the aggregate to his debit, the individuals amounts, their deposits, and please give each their deposit receipt at earliest convenience.

Mer.—In that true condensed form, it shall be done.

Jas.—Now, sir (*To Alonzo*) we will approach, with your consent, the nerve case. Let brevity rule, for I feel tired. (*Merrill sits amazed.*)

Al.—I'll be brief as possible. Years ago I robbed a man; once he was a gardener; then he had an interest in the Big Crevice, on Murderer's Bar, middle fork of the American river, and kept saloon and trading post; he was a friend to the boys and supposed I was to him; he intended to go home next steamer; he and I counted his money

when the boys were all at supper; I knew where he put it; that night or early morn I covered him with a derringer and he sensibly gave up his home stake; I fled and caused a false report that my body was found floating upon the Yuba above Marysville; methinks I can see him now, as his countenance declared my villainy; then the inward sorrow of being deprived of anticipated home-greetings, the vivid flashes of his mind portrayed upon his visage, I wish to God I could eradicate from memory.

Jas.—Well, what next?

Al.—I want to leave with you the amount and interest, and exercise all diligence to find him or his family and give it them. Don't say to have Wells Fargo do this, and until you find this man or his family, the money is yours, and I will make it $1,000 more that you are to have at least, for I feel the value of your patience. Will you consent?

Jas.—To inquire successfully I should know his name.

Al.—That I cannot definitely give. In early days few went by real name; we used to call him Canada, the Gardener; don't know whether his name was really Canada, or from that country; Kit Welch knows, he may tell you, he is vexed at me; Kit lives in 'Frisco, either at the Willows or Mission Dolores; his business is faro bank. Now, will you do this?

Jas.—Yes; and I think I know him, he was from Canada.

Al.—Very good; so much the better. Mr. Merrill, make check for $9,000, and $1,000 evtra. I believe he got a dividend that night from $9,000, and $1,000 extra. I believe he got a dividend that night from the Crevice Claim, after we counted the money, and no doubt it was all in. I did not count my ill-gotten gain, I merely turned it in. I wish I knew.

Jas.—I know this man from Canada, and also the transaction. He did get a dividend of $800 after the acount, and it all went.

Al. Is is possible? Then, Mr. Merrill, make it $1,000 more.

Jas.—No. I don't want a cent more than $9,000. But you may give poor Old Joe, if you like, the $1,000, as a reward for his and Rachael's parental love for Nellie, the orphan.

Al.—Mr. Merrill, make two checks, $1,000 each, for Joseph and Rachael, and give them.

Mer.—There, sir, sign (*he signs*), for Jasper and the aggregate.

Al.—There, landlord, is the check for the Gardener, and when you see him, say for the best, and I hope he may get his own and that I may hear of it before I die. *Exit Merrill.*

Jas.—Arm yourself with nerve, Alonzo. Here, before you die, your wish is gratified, for the Gardener has got his own (*holding up cheek*).

Al. (*Staggers*)—What do I hear? What do you say? (*Excited.*)

Jas.—I say I am the Gardener, although changed. It was I that looked into the gun.

Al.—My God! is it true? It is, and I see it all. You were after your own, heard and listened to the widow's and orphan's lamentations and risked for them. It is well done, and am I to be punished? (*Dropping on knees*)

Jas.—Not by me; up and go, seek happiness and health, or you may have to square the State attorney.

Al.—My trunks are packed and I'm waiting (all being done) for the stage, (*looking at watch*) and it is now due. (*Seeming frustrated.*) Good-by, sir. (*Exit Alonzo, Jasper bowing and gazing after him queerly.*)

JOE, RACHAEL, NELLIE, RUTH *and* ELIZA *all stand around Jasper; seem excited.*

Joe.—Well, boss, ever since you told Rachael we would never see our child alive, after we got reconciled as well as we could, we clung to the hope that you could find her children, and I guess we can help you. It's so queer and mixed maybe you can explain when I tell you.

Jas.—Joseph, what is it?

Joe.—Rachael, you tell, because you say you must think nothing else only that Nellie is our Amy's child.

Rac.—I must think so until I am better convinced; circumstances declare it.

Jas.—What circumstances, Rachael?

Rac.—Why, the innumerable little stories and anecdotes that she keeps constantly reciting that her mammy learned her that I believe originated at our own fireside, and only a little wh le ago she repeated a little special prayer that could only be the one I taught Amy when a child, and it so filled us all that we come to talk with you, hoping you might possibly make a revelation. Can you, and will you? Don't hesitate, fearing we might mourn unreasonably. (*Constantly smoothing Nellie's hair.*) *Stage horn blows in the distance for Alonzo.*

Joe.—No, boss, we will stand it like Christians. Won't we, Nellie? (*With Rachael smoothing Nellie's hair.*)

Nel.—Yes, if it is so. I hope it is. Say, was mammy their girl?

Jas.—Yes, Nellie. She was their daughter Amy.

Nel.—Why, was mammy's name Annie? (*Enter Merrill, looking excited*).

Mer. (*rushing stride*) - Good news for everybody!

Jas.—Mr. Merrill, please take a seat for a moment. (*Merrill sits down, but is so elated he gets up and listens eagerly*).

Jas.—Now, Rachael, Joseph, Nellie and all Listen. This letter is faintly stamped, "Bayley's P.O.," when first mailed, and only short distance from Garden Ranch, where once Amy lived. When it arrived at Sacramento, by carelessness it was heavily stamped "Sacramento," obliterating Bayley's, for it nearly covers the original, and not being dated inside, Joseph and Rachael were led to think only of Sacramento. And, stronger proof still, here's this good old Bible (*turning to family record*), Rachael and Joseph, do you know it? See the record.

Rac. (*Looking at it*) - Oh, dear! Yes, that is my writing. I wrote her name there, and I gave her that very book when going from home. True, true, (*turning over leaf*) and there is her child Nellie's name in Amy's writing. Oh, Nellie! you were Amy's darling!

Joe.—Yes, and now she is our's. (*Both kissing her.*)

Enter JACK.

Jk. (*Excited*)—Alonzo's just off on the stage - took a heap of trunks. Did he square things for the Gardener? Landlord, here's a letter for you from him.

Jas.—Yes, Jack, he squared.

Jk.—Glad to know it. He went into that stage as though he was being chased by Waukeen and Three-Fingered Jack, the greatest bandits of their day, and said give you that letter quick.

Mer. - Jack, Alonzo left two small checks for Kentuck and Hoosier. He said you would tell their address. Do you know it?

Jk.—Yes, they live at Cherokee Ravine; their P.O. is Bidwell's Bar, on Feather river, Bute county (*excited*).

Nel. (*all the time looking in Bible. - to Jasper*)—Say, mammy's name in the Bible is Amy. I thought it was Annie?

Jas—I will explain that, Nellie, to all. Mr. Page, Nellie's father, when living, the first time he saw Amy, it was love at sight It was in early days, - Fourth July dance, at Bayley's Ranch. He asked her hand for next quadrille. She consented, and wrote "Amy," less one stroke in letter *m*, upon the programme card. Hence, Any. He read it "Any," and danced and courted her as Any. But you see, from the record in Bible, of marriage, it's Amy. Nellie's father and I were partners in Garden Ranch when they married. I lived with them awhile after marriage, and as he fancied the name of Annie, instead of Amy, she indulged him, so she was better known as Annie.

Nel.—I remember their laughing and talking about their first dance. Oh, dear, were you papa's partner in Garden Ranch?

Jas.—Yes, Nellie; I located Garden Ranch. In early day, your pa and I kept cabin together. I sold him my interest and went river mining.

Nel.—Oh, I have often heard them talk of you. The old well is in the garden yet, mammy said you made to irrigate.

Jas. (*Merrill handing Jack paper*)—Mr. Goodman, there is conscience money from Alonzo, $910; it was a hold-out when you were pards in game.

Jk.—Thanks. He might have kept it. But what do I hear,—you the Gardener, and call me Mr. Goodman? I thought you a representative of the Gardener, and who told you my name is Goodman?

Jas.—Yes, I am the Gardener, and you are Mr. Goodman. Years ago, if you will remember, I kept employment office in Ophir—now Oroville. You left your name with me for a job; said you went broke at the Magnolia and cursed the tiger. I placed you as steward at the Golden Gate restaurant. The boys used to call you Silver-foot, because you were so slick.

Jk.—Ah, I remember, and the boys used to call you Canada. Is it possible? Kit Welch would give the world to see you—but stop a moment; you have seen Kit have you not, and did I understand you that Alonzo squared you good?

Jas.—Yes, I saw Kit at the Willows, and Alonzo did fairly well with me; amazing for the widow and orphan—gave nice pin money to Rachael and Joseph. Mr. Merrill, give these people to understand their financial position, I think the result of having patience with Alonzo. (*Opens the letter that Jack gave from Alonzo and reads to himself.*)

Mer. (*Reads from paper*)—The aggregate to all your credits in the house of Wells Fargo is $29,000, and to be distributed as follows:

To	Nellie Page, the orphan, ...	$12,000
"	Miss Eliza Ferguson, ...	10,000
"	Mrs. Ruth Ferguson, ...	5,000
"	Rachael and Joseph Conners, each $1,000,	2,000
		$29,000

Get your deposit receipts on call.

Jas.—This letter from Alonzo, per Mr. Goodman, is an assignment. Listen a moment. It's a question for us not to judge whether it's from conscience or from fear of being punished by State law; but it's solid; signed in his own hand-write and sealed:—

To Canada, once called the Gardener, and now the Proprietor of the Ruth House:

Sir—I assign all my right, title and interest into the hands of Wells Fargo, the Gulch Mining Claim, above Georgetown, for the benefit of Nellie Page, the orphan of William and Annie Page, the same idea to govern in this by said Wells Fargo as moneys heretofore mentioned from Garden Ranch. I defrauded said William Page out of said claim when undeveloped. In equity it is Nellie's. Don't sell, for it's a mint. ALONZO.

Mer.—The Gulch Claim to be Nellie's! There is only one richer in the state, and that is the Allison Quartz Lead, Grass Valley. Why, Alonzo never deposits from the Gulch less than thousands monthly, with very few men working, and there is ground enough to last for years.

Jas.—Come here, Nellie (*she comes to him.*) Do you understand all this? It is quite a contrast, this ALD the bun business.

Nel.—Yes, sir.

Rut. (*To Jasper, raising bowed head*)—Is this a dream, sir?

Jas.—Ruth, this is no fairy-like dream or Arabian Nights legend—it's truth. (*Nellie raises Jasper's hand and kisses it.*)

Rac.—Yes, kiss the hand of our benefactor. (*all bowing assent.*)

Jas.—I am only an instrument (*all in line with due grace.*) It is now growing late. Let's hie away to rest, remembering the language of violets.

CURTAIN AND THE END.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 015 793 163 5